

Kan. Cong. Dist. No. 4

Garner Shriver

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <u>Kansas</u>	
COUNTY: <u>Marion</u>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME	
COMMON:	"Pioneer Adobe House" (preferred name)
AND/OR HISTORIC:	Peter Loewen Adobe House

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: US-56 and South Ash Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Hillsboro			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Kansas	67063	Marion	115

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME: City of Hillsboro			
STREET AND NUMBER: 			
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE	
Hillsboro	Kansas	67063	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Register of Deeds			
STREET AND NUMBER: Marion County Courthouse			
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE	
Marion	Kansas	66861	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY: NONE			
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: 			
STREET AND NUMBER: 			
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE	

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moved	Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The "Pioneer Adobe House" (or Peter Loewen Adobe House), which now stands in Hillsboro's Memorial Park, was originally located on a half-section line road one mile west and two and one-half miles south of Hillsboro. The rectangular structure measures approximately 25 feet wide and 40 feet long. Exterior walls which are poured of a mud and straw mixture are 18 inches thick. Interior walls were made of large adobe sod bricks. The house is constructed in what must be designated a Vernacular style.

The roof is a simple, steep-pitched gable running the length of the building and covered with wood shingles. A brick chimney is located about mid way along the ridge line. The gable ends of the house are of vertical frame construction. Window openings are simple rectangles, and the windows are of the double hung sash type and flanked by wood shutters. The main entrance faces east, and the door is a simple frame rectangle with no embellishments.

According to local historians the mud walls were made in the following manner: "After finding the exact type of soil needed, it was plowed, watered and mixed into mud. Horses were then ridden through the mud to mix it further. Straw, grass, and like materials were added to the mud along with more water. Worked all day by horses' hoofs, the mixture was considered ready when the hoofs pulled out of the mud with a 'pop'." Forms were built and the adobe wheeled to the wall. It was poured in layers, packed and tramped down by barefoot men and boys and a long time given to drying between layers. The layers were visible on the exterior walls of this house prior to its relocation and plastering.

The hearth and chimney were made of sun-dried mud bricks. The seven room house was one floor with the large loft above it left as one large open area for the storage of seeds, harvested crops, feed supplies, and other items.

Presently the adobe house is a neat white-painted building. Originally the exterior was whitewashed each year. The building presents a somewhat different appearance than originally. The first roof was of thatch. It is believed to have been replaced with wood shingles around 1901. At about the same time the original frame barn which had been attached to the house in the Russian fashion was moved a short distance away. Some changes were also made to the interior walls. When the building was relocated, a frame barn was added to the north which resembles the original. Also, some of the interior walls were reset and repaired. The house was then furnished as a typical pioneer Mennonite house might have been equipped; the barn extension houses a museum.

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7. March 5, 1973

Additional data on the wall construction

A fact not mentioned in any written account of the Adobe House included in the bibliography is that of its 18-inch exterior walls only the outer six inches are of packed or trampled adobe construction. The inner 12 inches are of adobe bricks. A grandson of the builder said by way of explanation that his grandfather had intended to make the house entirely of adobe bricks but had decided it was too time consuming. Two stacks of bricks were laid before they were completely dry, forming a wall 12 inches thick. Then a wood frame some eight to ten inches high was built on the outside and adobe mud poured into it and packed. This process was repeated until the desired wall height of seven and one-half feet was reached.

When the building was relocated, all of the exterior walls were successfully moved except for the north wall which crumbled as it was being placed at the new location. It was rebuilt using newly made adobe bricks which included some of the original materials from the shattered wall. The original interior adobe brick partition walls were too thin to move and were therefore rebuilt from newly made adobe bricks which also included materials from the original bricks.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian ☐ 16th Century ☐ 18th Century ☐ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century ☐ 17th Century ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1876

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | | <u>Western settlement</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The "Pioneer Adobe House," which is now relocated in Hillsboro, was once a typical dwelling in a small Mennonite community southwest of Hillsboro. Built in 1876 by German-Russian emigrant Peter Loewen, the house formerly stood in a double line of about 16 houses which comprised the settlement of Hoffnungsthal.

The Mennonites had their origin in two countries, Switzerland and Holland, but because of religious persecutions they were forced to make a number of migrations which eventually brought many to Kansas in the 1870's. In the late 18th century a large number of the Mennonites of German descent had gone to Russia at the invitation of Czarina Catherine II and on assurances of religious freedom and exemption from military service. In 1870 Czar Alexander II abrogated the military exemptions which the various Mennonite groups had been assured would last forever. They were given ten years to emigrate if they wished to do so. After futile appeals to the Russian government, they sent delegations to North America to look for the new home. Fortunately the railroads in the United States at that time were energetically seeking settlers for their lands in Kansas, Nebraska, and neighboring states, and their agents were active throughout Europe. The major representative of the Santa Fe railroad was C. B. Schmidt, a German-speaking and German-born American who probably did more than anyone else to bring the Mennonite settlers to central Kansas.

The first groups arrived in Kansas in 1874 and began purchasing lands from the Santa Fe railroad. The first congregation to migrate as a unit was the Krimmer group from the Crimean peninsula which came to Marion county. That group is estimated to have contained 35 to 40 families and about 150 persons. South of present Hillsboro the Krimmer group laid out two villages on the Russian pattern about three miles apart: the larger was Gnadenau (Grace Meadow) and the smaller Hoffnungsthal (Hope Valley). Each was laid out in the middle of a section with the village street running east and west. At first each farmer had a narrow strip of land a half mile long running from his house on the street to the section line. Later the property boundaries were changed and farms laid out on the American pattern.

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8. Peter Loewen arrived at Peabody in Marion county on July 11, 1876, and went to Hoffnungsthal where he began construction of his house in the fall. The house was located on the north side of the village street, the second from the east end and just east of the South Cottonwood river. Like most of the Mennonite settlers, Loewen erected his house in the style which had been used in Russia. (see description) Although the house was slightly damaged a number of times by flood waters of the Cottonwood river, it continued in use as a residence until 1955. Shortly thereafter some Hillsboro residents became interested in moving the house to a city park for restoration. Two grandsons of Peter Loewen deeded the building to the city of Hillsboro and in 1958 it was moved to Memorial Park at the southwest corner of US-56 and Ash street. The walls were moved in sections to prevent cracking and were then placed on a stone foundation. After restoration, the house was furnished as a typical Mennonite pioneer family might have equipped it and opened to the public in June, 1960, as the "Pioneer Adobe House Museum." An attached frame barn, similar to the original built by Peter Loewen, was added to the north end of the house to provide more museum space.

The "Pioneer Adobe House" (or Peter Loewen Adobe House) is one of a very small number of original sod houses remaining which were constructed by the Mennonite immigrants of the 1870's and the only one open to the public. Although sod houses were not a rarity in Kansas, this type of adobe sod house was unusual and as the best known surviving example of its type, this house is important to the architectural heritage of Kansas as well as historically significant.

9. Meyer, Ruth, "One-Time Home of Mud Now Is Museum," Wichita Eagle and Beacon, September 2, 1962.
Meyer, Ruth, "Structure Built by Mennonites in 1876," Hillsboro Star-Journal, May 17, 1956.
"Pioneer Adobe House Being Moved to Park," Wichita Morning Eagle, June 15, 1958.
"Pioneer House at Hillsboro Is Popular Tourist Attraction," McPherson Daily Sentinel, July 3, 1965.
Wiebe, David V., Grace Meadow: The Story of Gnadenau and Its First Elder (Hillsboro, Kan., Mennonite Brethren Publishing House, 1967).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

All About Marion County, Kansas (Marion Centre, Kan., E. W. Hoch, publisher, 1876), pp. 10, 16, 17.
 Bartel, Lois Franz, "A Pioneer Home," Mennonite Life, v. 17, no. 4 (October, 1962), pp. 162-166.
 Campbell, Paule, "Restored Pioneer Home Has Unique Heating Plant," Salina Journal, May 12, 1963.
A Guide to Hillsboro, Kansas (Hillsboro, Kan., The Mennonite Brethren Publishing Co., 1940), pp. 15, 16.
History of the State of Kansas (Chicago, A. T. Andreas, 1883), p. 1265.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 0 0	0 0 0		0 0 0	0 0 0	
NE	0 0 0	0 0 0		0 0 0	0 0 0	
SE	0 0 0	0 0 0		0 0 0	0 0 0	
SW	0 0 0	0 0 0		0 0 0	0 0 0	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:		
Richard Pankratz, Planner		
ORGANIZATION	DATE	
Kansas State Historical Society	June 19, 1972	
STREET AND NUMBER:		
120 West Tenth Street		
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE
Topeka	Kansas 66612	20

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name

Nyle H. Miller

Title

Executive Director, Kansas
State Historical Society

Date

June 19, 1972

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

SEE INSTRUCTIONS